

**RAC Meeting:  
November 10, 2004  
Idaho Falls, ID**

Attending: Louise Stark, Dennis Thornock, Eric Tilman, Kent Christopher, Dino Lowry, Early Skeen, Steve Trafton, Jim Hawkins, Doug Hancey, Ben O'Neal, Rick Snyder, Garth Taylor (QUORUM).

Introductions: Each of the RAC members introduced themselves, their occupations, their hobbies, a team they had participated in previously and why they were successful, and their interest in being on the RAC. The team members' hobbies all included outdoor activities, which will be a positive asset for dealing with natural resource issues. The team also discussed successful teams they had been on and developed the following list of characteristics of a successful team:

- Interested in Efficiency and Process
- Get Results – not just talk
- Diversity
- Positive Improvement
- Cooperative
- “Making things work”
- Energy/Leadership
- Helping People
- Common Vision
- Focused
- Controls own destiny
- Identify problems
- Make a difference
- Systems approach

*RAC Welcome (K Lynn Bennett):* New day for the BLM RACs. We have our new district boundaries in place, new RACs (from three to four RACs). This will help keep issues in the local communities.

RACs are the front line for interaction with the public. You advise the District Manager predominantly, but also the State Director on issues of statewide significance. This group should meet at least three times this year, preferably four (quarterly meetings). Earlier this year, the President signed an executive order (See last page of these notes) directing the agencies to use cooperative conservation – that is, to seek local input for federal decisions. Some of the more important issues statewide/nationally:

Sage Grouse: USFWS is working through the process to decide whether to list the species. Meanwhile, BLM and its state partners are developing a statewide sage grouse conservation plan through the local groups. I would suggest that you attend a local working group meeting to become familiar with the plan. A draft is in circulation and will be released to the public in

December, and the public will have a chance to comment on the plan. Once that is complete, it will be signed by several agencies in the state, including BLM. (BLM manages half of the habitat in the U.S.) (1) Before I sign the plan, I want a recommendation from this Council regarding the plan, and (2) whether or not the species is listed, the issue is not going away, and so I want to make sure the plan works and that we have good recommendations on how to manage the habitat.

Energy Development: Not only the development of resources, but deciding where the lines are going to cross BLM lands. We have seven applications for wind power development right now, and the Cotterel Mountain proposal is the furthest along in development and studies. If you have an interest, please pass along your thoughts.

Off-Highway Vehicle Use: In the past, we have had open lands except in areas where they have been specifically closed. We have many more visitors than the Park Service in many areas; people visit the Park Service sites, but they come to play on the public lands. Our future land use plans are probably going to emphasize closing the public lands to OHV use, except for areas that are specifically open. Other forms of recreation are also important, and we want to encourage that use, but also protect the resources as we go.

Livestock Grazing: Standards and Guides process is an important process; your Charter includes a requirement for the District to provide some training in rangeland health. We will have, at some point in the future, some new rules/policies on how to manage livestock grazing on public lands. One of the challenges we will have is developing a new monitoring protocol to help us determine whether we are improving conditions on grazing allotments.

Open Spaces: We have an active Land and Water Conservation Fund program in this District, and it's indicative of the interest people have in preserving open spaces. We are also watching Congressman Simpson's Boulder-White Clouds initiative, but we have not been a party to the initiative; it is citizen-driven. We will need to wait until after the legislation is written before we can render an opinion, but we support citizen-driven initiatives.

*DM's Comments (Joe Kraayenbrink):* In addition to the topics K Lynn described above, which are also District priorities, we have a new District with new issues. With the Salmon and Challis field offices come the challenges of salmon and steelhead fisheries issues. We have significant fire management and fuels management issues in each of the field offices, and we are also monitoring with interest the development of the Boulder-White Clouds wilderness proposal. We appreciate your interest in the RAC, congratulate you on your appointments, and hope to build a high-performance team.

*Brief overview* presented on BLM, BLM in Idaho, the Idaho Falls District and its Field Offices. Informational presentations by the Field Managers or designees.

*Elections:* Following lunch, the RAC elected Doug Hancey to be the new RAC Chair, Jim Hawkins as Vice Chair, and Dino Lowrey as Secretary.

*FMDA:* Eric Limbach, BLM Fire Management Direction Amendments (FMDA) team leader, gave an overview of the FMDA process to this point. The Upper Snake River District began in 2001 to amend its 12 land use plans for fire and fuels management direction. The Draft EIS is now out on the streets, and public meetings will be held in December. The draft document analyzes four alternatives for treating hazardous fuels and introducing fire into the ecosystem. Copies of the full EIS are available for the RAC members, and copies of the executive summary were handed out at the meeting. The document is available on the web at [www.id.blm.gov](http://www.id.blm.gov). The close of the comment period is February 10, 2005.

*Annual Work Plan:* The RAC reviewed the following list of possible topics for their next couple of meetings:

- Sage Grouse Conservation
- OHV/Recreation Use
- Livestock Grazing (Standards and Guidelines)
- Preserving Open Spaces
- Energy Development (including wind power)
- Fire and Fuels management
- Tribal and Treaty Rights
- Wild Horse and Burro program
- Invasive Species
- Public Access

*Fee Demo Program:* Motion advanced to continue to subgroup for Salmon-Challis Forest fee demo funds distribution. The action is needed to continue a FACA-chartered process for disbursement of the funds. MOTION CARRIED, and a subgroup of Louise Stark, Earl Skeen and Dino Lowrey will work with the Forest, if they desire to keep this group in existence. The subgroup will then bring the list of approved projects to a future RAC meeting (probably in the spring) for full RAC approval. (Joe Kraayenbrink will talk with Salmon-Challis Forest Supervisor to see if he wants the group to continue.)

Next Meeting: Scheduled for January 20-21 in Idaho Falls

Sage Grouse: Between now and the next meeting, Idaho Fish & Game will release the state's sage grouse conservation strategy (POSSIBLE CHANGES HERE – Draft now due for release in April). BLM will distribute the strategy to all RAC members, in preparation for a discussion at the next meeting to make recommendations to the state director. The national BLM strategy is available to the public for viewing at [www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/sage\\_grouse/](http://www.blm.gov/nhp/spotlight/sage_grouse/).

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribe will present a briefing on the Tribes' treaty rights, to familiarize RAC members with them and with federal requirements to consult with the Tribes.



For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
August 26, 2004

## **Executive Order Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Purpose. The purpose of this order is to ensure that the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Environmental Protection Agency implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that promotes cooperative conservation, with an emphasis on appropriate inclusion of local participation in Federal decisionmaking, in accordance with their respective agency missions, policies, and regulations.

Sec. 2. Definition. As used in this order, the term "cooperative conservation" means actions that relate to use, enhancement, and enjoyment of natural resources, protection of the environment, or both, and that involve collaborative activity among Federal, State, local, and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

Sec. 3. Federal Activities. To carry out the purpose of this order, the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, and Defense and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations and in coordination with each other as appropriate:

(a) carry out the programs, projects, and activities of the agency that they respectively head that implement laws relating to the environment and natural resources in a manner that:

(i) facilitates cooperative conservation;

(ii) takes appropriate account of and respects the interests of persons with ownership or other legally recognized interests in land and other natural resources;

(iii) properly accommodates local participation in Federal decisionmaking; and

(iv) provides that the programs, projects, and activities are consistent with protecting public health and safety;

(b) report annually to the Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality on actions taken to implement this order; and

(c) provide funding to the Office of Environmental Quality Management Fund (42 U.S.C. 4375) for the Conference for which section 4 of this order provides.

Sec. 4. White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation. The Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality shall, to the extent permitted by law and subject to the availability of appropriations:

(a) convene not later than 1 year after the date of this order, and thereafter at such times as the Chairman deems appropriate, a White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation (Conference) to facilitate the exchange of information and advice relating to (i) cooperative conservation and (ii) means for achievement of the purpose of this order; and

(b) ensure that the Conference obtains information in a manner that seeks from Conference participants their individual advice and does not involve collective judgment or consensus advice or deliberation.

Sec. 5. General Provision. This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

GEORGE W. BUSH

THE WHITE HOUSE,

August 26, 2004.

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